

## Message Text

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ACTION CU-04

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R 190827Z APR 74

FM AMEMBASSY LAGOS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3605

INFO USIA WASHDC

AMCONSUL IBADAN

AMCONSUL KADUNA

UNCLAS LAGOS 3259

KADUNA PASS KANO

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: OEXC NI

SUBJECT: PROPOSAL FOR FOLLOW-UP TO MERRITT VISIT

1. DURING RECENT VISIT NIGERIA, STAG FRANCIS MERRITT COMPLETED  
ARRANGEMENTS FOR HAYSTACK MOUNTAIN SCHOOL OF CRAFTS TO FINANCE  
PARTICIPATION FIVE NIGERIAN ARTISTS IN AFRO-AMERICAN SESSION SCHEDULE  
D  
TAKE PLACE DEER ISLE, MAINE, JULY 12 - AUGUST 9.

2. MERRITT DESCRIBED SESSION AS FIRST EVER HELD HAYSTACK AND SAYS IT  
DESIGNED BRING AMERICANS IN GENERAL AND AFRO-AMERICANS IN  
PARTICULAR IN CLOSER CONTACT WITH AFRICAN ARTISANS AND MORE  
AWARE SIMILARITIES/CONTRASTS BETWEEN WORKS OF BLACK AMERICAN  
CRAFTSMEN AND AFRICAN COUNTERPARTS.

3. NIGERIAN PARTICIPANTS ARE: MR. JOMOH BURAIMOH (PAINTER), MALLAM  
(MR.) ABBAS A.M. AHUWAN (POTTER), MR. TOYIN OGUNTONA (WEAVER),  
TWINS SEVEN SEVEN (MUSCIAN, PAINTER), MRS. OYENIKE SALAU (WEAVER  
AND WIFE OF TWINS SEVEN SEVEN).

4. EMBASSY REGARDS HAYSTACK PROJECT AS EXCELLENT EXAMPLE PRIVATE  
EXCHANGE AND IDEAL FOLLOW UP TO MERRITT VISIT. IN ADDITION, IT WILL  
PROVIDE OPPOTUNITY FOR INTERACTION BETWEEN THESE ARTISTS AND  
AMERICANS FROM VARIETY OF PROFESSIONS AND BACKGROUNDS IN UNIQUE  
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PHYSICAL SETTING WHICH FEW VISITORS HAVE OCCASION OR REASON TO SEE.

5. WHILE EMBASSY IS PLEASED WITH ARRANGEMENT, WE BELIEVE IT ESSENTIAL THAT THESE ARTISTS HAVE BROADER AND MORE REALISTIC EXPOSURE TO US THAN HAYSTACK/DEER ISLE WILL PROVIDE. AS RESULT, WE WISH PROPOSE TWO WEEK POST SESSION TOUR OF US THAT WOULD ENABLE THEM VISIT OTHER AMERICAN CITIES AND INSTITUTIONS. THIS ADDITIONAL EXPOSURE WOULD NOT ONLY PUT DEER ISLE EXPERIENCE IN PROPER PESPCTIVE, BUT WOULD ALSO ADD TO OVERALL IMPACT OF VISIT AND BETTER ENABLE THEM RELATE IT UPON RETURN NIGERIA.

6. EMBASSY THEREFORE REQUESTS THAT DEPARTMENT CONSIDER ARRANGING TWO WEEK POST-SESSION TOUR ALONG LINES DESCRIBED ABOVE FOR FIVE ARTISTS WHOM MERRITT HAS INVITED.

7. WHILE MERRITT IN NIGERIA, EMBASSY BECAME AWARE -- AS RESULT ARTICLE IN NIGERIAN OBSERVER -- THAT MISS COLLETTE OMAGBAI (ARTIST) IS CURRENTLY PURSUING GRADUATE WORK AT NYU ON FMG SCHOLARSHIP. CAO RECALLED HAVING MET MISS OMAGBAI DURING FY-73 ABU ART EDUCATION SEMINAR (IN WHICH STAG JAMES LEWIS PARTICIPATED), AND ASKED MERRITT IF HE WOULD AGREE TO HER ATTENDING HAYSTACK SESSION. MERRITT FAVORED PROPOSAL AND INDICATED THAT HAYSTACK WOULD PROVIDE HER ROOM AND BOARD.

IN OUR OPINION, IT WOULD BE AN ADDITIONAL PLUS FOR HAYSTACK TO HAVE ONE OF NIGERIA'S FEW EDUCATED WOMEN ARTISTS PARTICIPATE IN SESSION. WE ALSO BELIEVE THAT MISS OMAGBAI, GIVEN HER EXPERIENCE AS ARTIST AND EDUCATOR, WOULD GREATLY BENEFIT FROM THE UNIQUE EXPOSURE AND EXPERIENCE.

WHILE OUR ASSESSMENT MISS OMAGBAI BASED ON FIRST HAND IMPRESSIONS, AND WHILE WE BELIEVE HER DESERVING OF CONSIDERATION FRO GRANT, WOULD PREFER ADDITIONAL ASSESSMENT. THEREFORE REQUEST DEPT. CONTACT PROFESSOR HOUSEMAN (FIRST NAME NOT KNOWN), CHAIRMAN, DEPARTVENT OF ART EDUCATION, NYU, FOR ADDITIONAL ASSESSMENT MISS OMAGBAI AND WHETHER OR NOT HE WOULD RECOMMEND HER PARTICIPATION HAYSTACK SESSION. IF HIS ENDORSEMENT SUFFICIENT, AND SHE AVAILABLE, REQUEST GRANT BE AUTHORIZED PROVIDE MISS OMAGBAI ROUNDTrip TRANSPORT NEW YORK-DEER ISLE-NEW YORK AND THAT SHE BE INCLUDED POST-SESSION US TOUR. SINCE HAYSTACK PROVIDING ROOM AND BOARD (JULY 12-AUGUST 9), PER DIEM THIS PERIOD OPTIONAL.

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8. WHILE WE WOULD PREFER FALLOUT FUNDING FOR THESE SIZ GRANTS, WE WILLING, GIVEN REDUCED COSTS INVOLVED AND IMPRTANCE WE ATTACH TO IT AS MERRITT FOLLOW UP, USE FY-75 FUNDS.

9. FOR POST-PROGRAM/TOUR SUGGESTIONS, PLEASE CONTACT MERRITT, FORMER STAG LLOYD MCNEIL, AND EVANGELINE J. MONTGOMERY (ART CONSULTANT, OKLAND, CALIFORNIA MUSEUM).

10. IF PROPOSAL ACCEPTABLE WILL SEND BIODATA FOR JIMO BURAIMOH,  
ABBAS A.M. AHUWAN, TOYIN OGUNTONA, TWINS SEVEN SEVEN AND  
MRS. OYENIKE SALAU.

NOTE: ASSUME STATE 67193 WILL NOT PRECLUDE TWINS PARTICIPATION  
FOLLOW UP.

1.. ADVISE.  
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